

The Beartooth Highway: Economic Impacts and Summer Use



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Background Information

- Friends of the Beartooth and TAC funded an economic impact study of the Beartooth Highway.
- Data collection began May 31st, 2012 and continued through September 22nd, 2012 to capture the full summer season.
- Summer use and travel characteristics were captured along with visitor spending by nonresident travelers.



Driving the Beartooth Highway – May 31st, 2012.

Background Information (Cont'd)



- Little if any previous research on travelers to the Beartooth Region. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted on scenic byways.
- Very few scenic byways have had economic impact research.
- Image of the Beartooth Highway. How do travelers perceive the highway and surrounding communities?
- Destination image studies have primarily focused on countries, states, cities, or resorts (Pike, 2002).

Intercept Locations

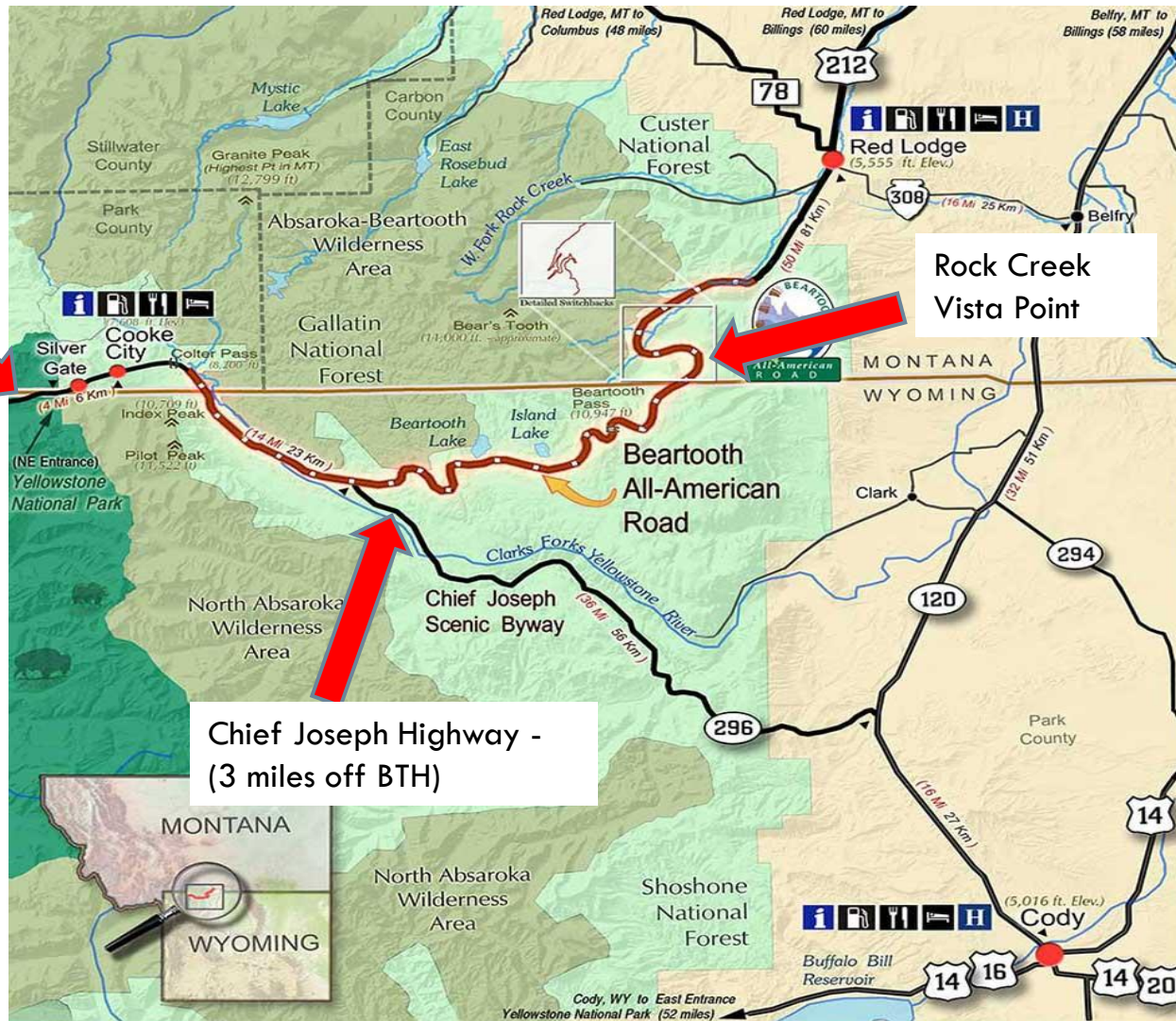
NE Gate
of YNP



Rock Creek
Vista Point



Chief Joseph Highway -
(3 miles off BTH)



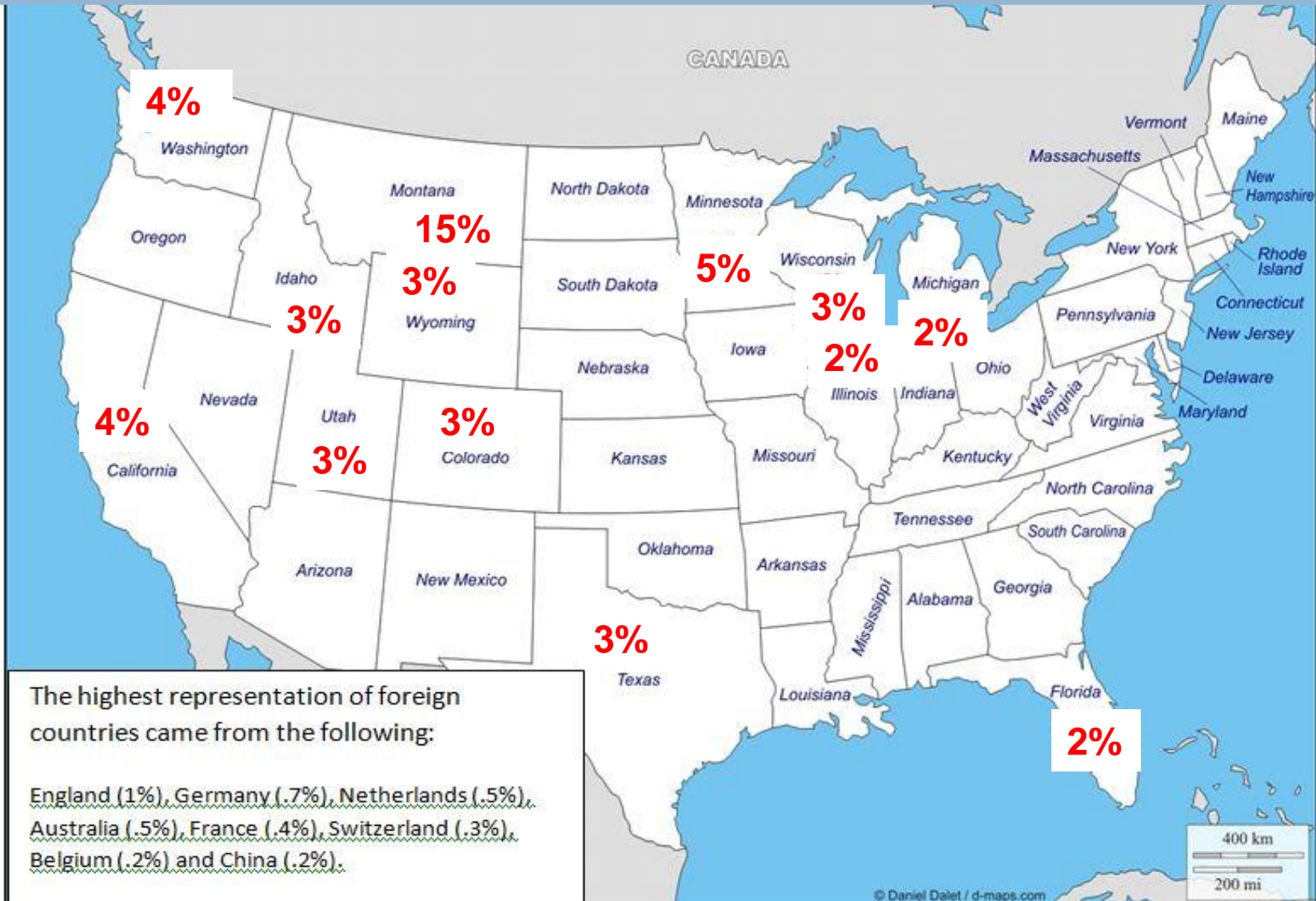
Interesting Findings



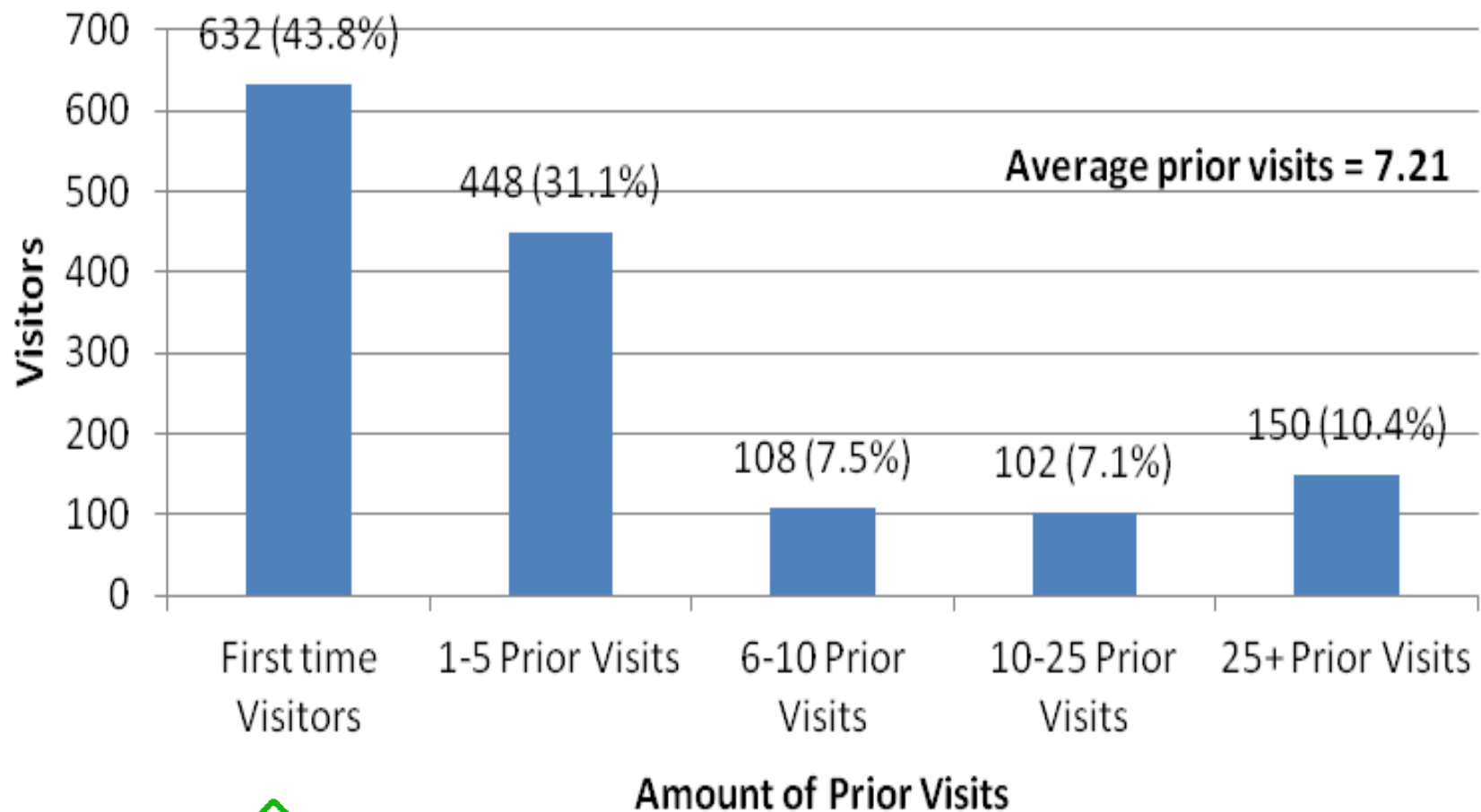
- 90% of traffic is nonresidents of the Beartooth region
- 44% were first time visitors to the Beartooth
- Average of 2 nights spent in the Beartooth region
- 49% also spent a night in Yellowstone, 27% spent a night in Billings and 25% also spent a night in West Yellowstone and Jackson, WY
- Motivations for traveling the highway were scenic beauty, natural surroundings, and open space.
- While driving they all love it, but first time visitors were more reserved, nervous, stressed and afraid than repeat visitors.

Residency of travelers

Visitors from all 50 states, 7 Canadian provinces, 30 foreign countries



Prior Visits to the Beartooth Region

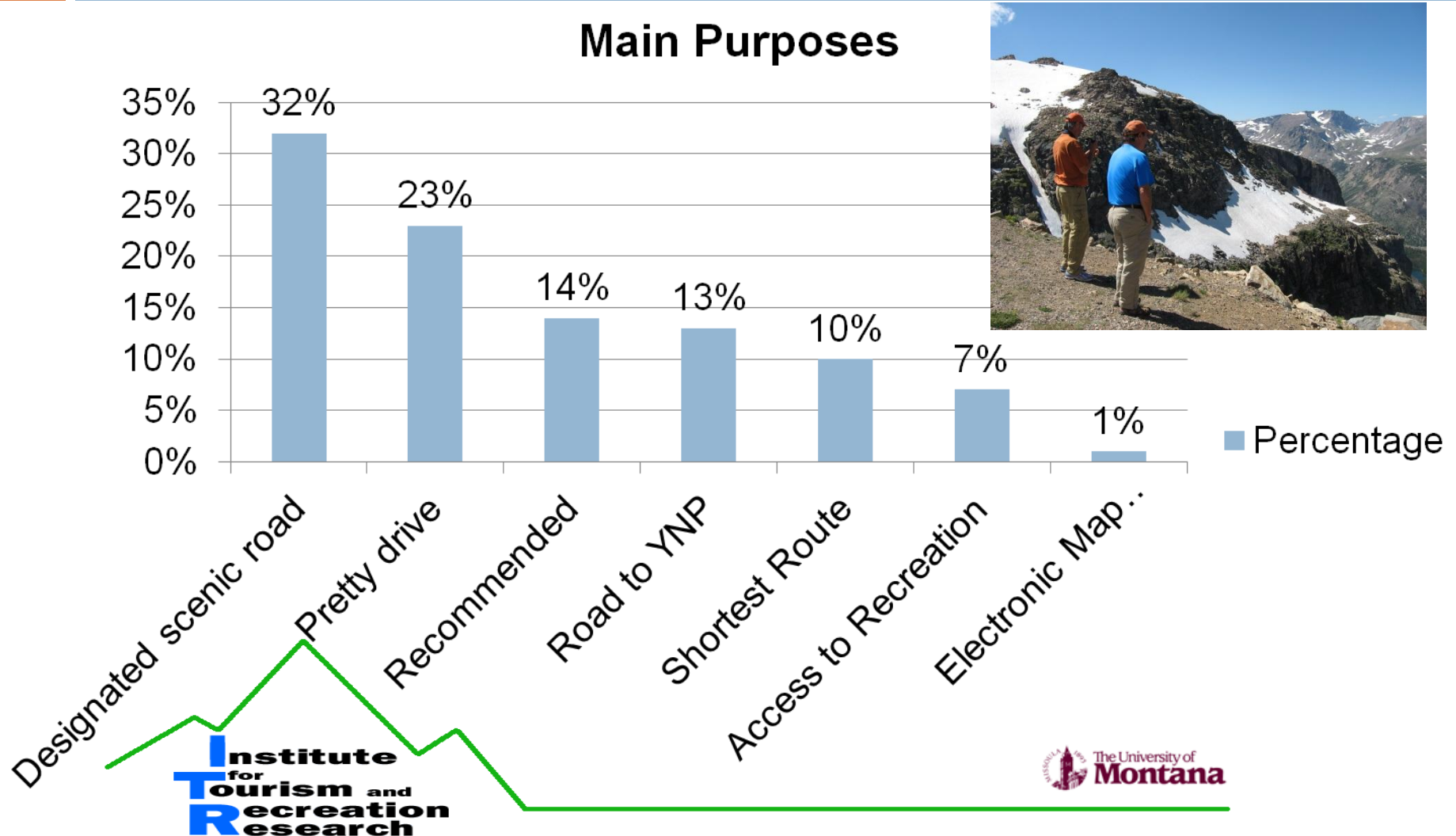


Nights Spent in the Beartooth Area

Nights Spent	First-Time Visitors	Repeat Visitors	All Visitors
Total	1.73 Nights	2.83 Nights	2.34 Nights



Main Purpose of Traveling the Beartooth Highway



Beartooth Highway Image Ratings

	Visitors
The Beartooth Highway is/has...*	Mean
...free of debris and litter. (n=1448)	3.45
...of good physical quality (n=1442)	3.37
...easy to navigate. (n=1445)	3.26
...safe and secure to drive on. (n=1446)	3.23
...a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. (n=1376)	3.09
...ample number of pullouts. (n=1442)	3.04
...good interpretive signs. (n=1426)	2.96
...too crowded. (n=1428)	1.90



Scale: 1 = “strongly disagree” to 4 = “strongly agree”

Beartooth Highway Ratings

The Beartooth Highway...	Mean
The BTH was a main destination. (54%)	2.65
I plan my travel routes to include scenic byways like BTH. (85%)	3.17
I would travel the BTH again. (93%)	3.50
I would recommend others to travel the BTH. (96%)	3.70
While Traveling the Beartooth highway...	
Visually stimulated	3.84
Happy	3.75
Calm	3.28
Adventurous	3.17

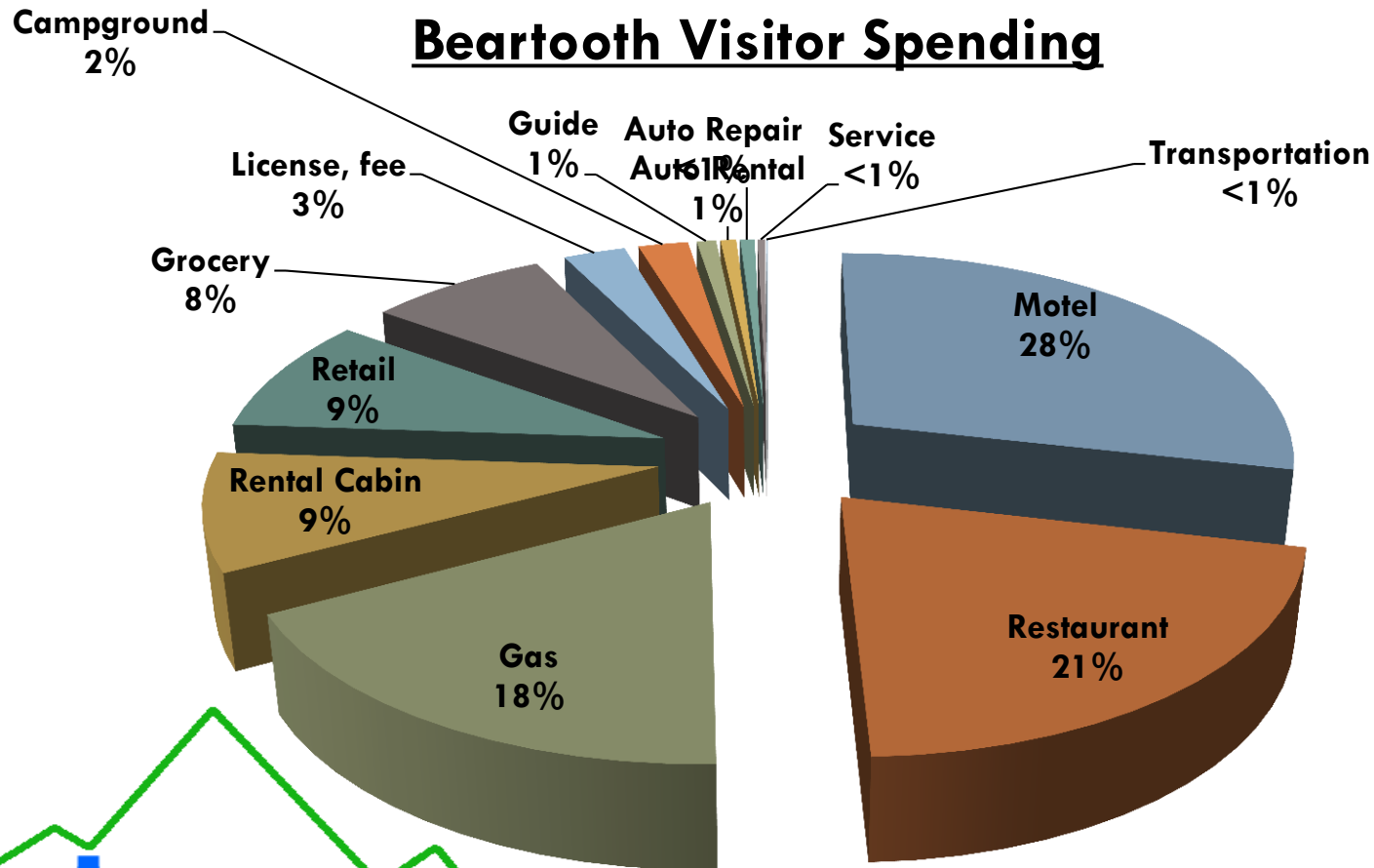
Scale: 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree"



Photos copied from
www.beartoothhighway.com

Visitor Spending in the Beartooth Region

Beartooth Visitor Spending

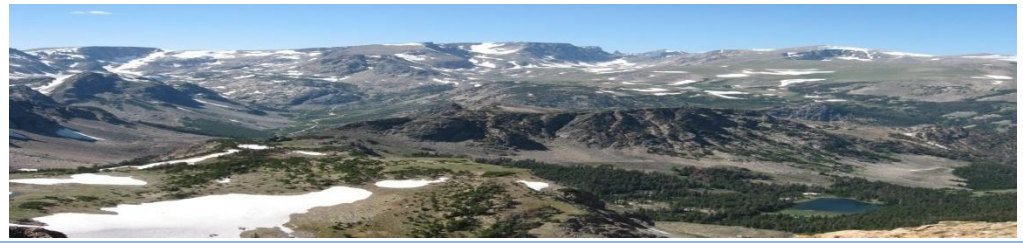


Economic Impacts of the Beartooth Highway – Carbon County & Park County MT; Park County WY

- Summer 2012 saw nonresidents spend **\$44.96 million** while traveling in the Beartooth Region
- Nonresidents spent **\$12.8 million** in Red Lodge, **\$12.1 million** in Cooke City/Silver Gate, and **\$20.1 million** in Cody
- Nonresident spending supports **\$50.24 million** in economic activity and supports **616 total jobs** due to spending in the Beartooth Region.



Conclusions



- Travelers come from everywhere! Nearly half of visitors are first-time visitors to the Beartooth Region.
- First Time visitors spend more/day, but spend less time in the area.
- Travelers visit the Beartooth Highway because it's a scenic road designation (32%)
- They will return and they will recommend the road.
- The road is a draw for nonresidents and a huge economic impact to the gateway communities.

Recommendations

- Improving the visitor experience – interpretive signage, keeping it clean, continued maintenance.
- Collaboration between stakeholders (state, county, and agency wide).
- Thinking in terms of a destination; more than just a road to Yellowstone NP.
- Preserving what makes the Beartooth “a special place”.



Acknowledgements

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Thank you! Questions?

